



CELEBRATING

IN THE SHADOW OF COVID-19

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*Jamie Coffey
shares tips
for stress-free
entertaining
and gifting*



Find the recipe for Jamie Coffey's peppermint marshmallows on Page 64.



“Sometimes these little things we do give us hope.”
— JAMIE COFFEY



WHEN IT COMES TO HOLIDAY DECORATING, Jamie Coffey is all about Christmas trees. But he'll be the first to tell you: "If putting the tree up is not your thing, don't do it!" Focus on food and florals instead, he says, and don't worry about it. Welcome to Holiday 2020, during which setting a personal intention is key, especially after the challenging months leading up to it. "This year is about sitting yourself down and saying what is the most important thing to you, and building your holiday plan around that," Coffey says.

This longtime Richmonder and former creative director of Williams & Sherrill (W&S) is passionate about holiday entertaining and the opportunity it presents to connect with people. Coffey is by nature a giver, and entertaining is his way of giving back. "When I'm entertaining, I'm caring for people," he says. "My love language is giving."

Since W&S closed in October 2019, Coffey has launched XOJ, a mobile interior design showroom, and he's now part of a collective of designers forming a new design center in Jackson Ward, headed up by Flourish Spaces' Stevie McFadden. The new collaboration allows Coffey not only to exercise his design prowess but also to focus on building relationships, which he says is a better fit for him than retail. "I feel very fortunate," he says. "I feel like if you can live authentically, if you have time to do that, God and the universe conspire to make it all work out, whether it feels that way or not."

As a creative and a giver, the holidays are a natural showcase for Coffey's talents and passions. Though no one knows what late 2020 holds, Coffey says it's important to celebrate — whether that means hosting small gatherings with your "pod" of people, making a meal to drop off for

ABOVE: Vintage frames display Coffey's winter hats and scarves as art. **OPPOSITE TOP:** Cut and roll the marshmallow edges in powdered sugar. **OPPOSITE RIGHT:** Fielding Archer candlesticks and eucalyptus on the mantel. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** Coffey's well-stocked bar



One of Coffey's go-to gifts, his oyster fry kit delivers oysters with all the fixings.

Jamie Coffey's Holiday Hacks

GET INTO THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT WITH FRAGRANCE.

Starting early in the season, Coffey likes to simmer a pot of water with citrus peel (lemon, orange or grapefruit) and spice (cloves, whole cinnamon sticks or star anise) to fill the house with a holiday fragrance. Create a sachet or simply toss the ingredients into the water.

STOCK UP ON GROCERIES AND GIFTS.

"Being prepared is going to be more important than ever," he says, citing a tenuous supply chain. "Get butter and freeze it. Have all your supplies ready. Don't assume you can pop out and pick something up." He also suggests doing some post-holiday gift shopping to stock up for the following year. He likes to hit local, nontraditional gift shops like antique stores and malls, even grocery stores, for cool napkins and other gourmet finds.

GIVE GIFTS YOU CAN CREATE EN MASSE.

Coffey says that if you are organized and want to give everyone the same gift, do it. Some good ideas for big-batch gifts include flavored vodkas or hot cocoa kits. Personalize gift tags. "Gifts speak to our relationships, to who we are, to my story, your story and how we intertwine," he says.

USE TAKEOUT.

If a restaurant or grocery makes a dish that you love, buy it, plate it, make it your own. No shame. "Buy what you can buy, make what you can make" is always Coffey's mantra.

WINE MAKES A GREAT GIFT.

If you find a good wine, buy it in bulk. When gifting it, mark the bottle with a metallic Sharpie or a manila-paper tag so that the recipient remembers who gave it to them when they enjoy it.



someone or creating individual gifts to leave on doorsteps. "Do things that are festive and maybe outside of tradition, but that lead to a more intimate way of connecting with who you have in your life," he suggests.

Coffey's Church Hill home reflects to his approach to entertaining, with welcoming, flexible spaces where nothing is too precious. His kitchen is a hive of holiday activity; everything is within reach on open shelves, a vintage wire locker and an upcycled island that serves as both a workhorse and the hub of the party. Here, he'll make his signature dishes, whether to be enjoyed at home with his cohort or delivered to friends, as well as create other gifts-to-go — jams, an oyster fry kit, giant skillet cookies. "You can't treat it like any other day, because it is special," Coffey says. "Sometimes these little things we do give us hope."

Whatever Holiday 2020 looks like, Coffey suggests taking it back to the basics. "If your basic is glitzy-glammy, own it. If people aren't coming to your house, focus on your wrapping a little bit more. If you are more simplistic, there is nothing more beautiful than solid wrapping, solid ribbon and a sprig of greenery. Use your glue gun to its fullest!" *Recipes continue on p.64*

LEFT: Vintage bottle brush trees and hotel silver from Coffey's collections TOP: Coffey's butter pecan bourbon milk punch gets a dusting of grated nutmeg. BOTTOM: Set out a special bottle of liqueur and glasses so guests can help themselves.



celebrating in the shadow of covid-19 cont'd



PEPPERMINT MARSHMALLOWS

- INGREDIENTS:**
- 4 envelopes (4 tablespoons) of unflavored gelatin
 - 1 1/2 cups of water
 - 3 cups of sugar
 - 1/4 cups of light corn syrup
 - 1/2 teaspoon of salt
 - 1 teaspoon of pure peppermint extract (if using pure peppermint oil, use 1/2 to 3/4 teaspoon)
 - 1 1/2 cups of crushed candy canes or peppermint candies (crushed in a food processor)
 - 1 to 1 1/2 cups of sifted powdered sugar

DIRECTIONS:
 Oil a 9- by 13-inch pan with 2-inch-tall sides. Line the pan with nonstick aluminum foil and lightly oil the foil (this stuff is sticky). Soften the gelatin with 3/4 cup of water in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a whisk attachment. Place the sugar, corn syrup and 3/4 cup of water in a heavy-bottomed sauce pan.

Bring to a boil, slowly melting the sugar, and cook until reaching 234 to 240 degrees on a candy or instant-read thermometer. With the whisk attachment of your mixer running at full speed, slowly stream the hot sugar liquid into the gelatin mixture (be careful — it can burn), and add the salt. Mix on high speed for about 12 minutes as it changes from a liquid into a cloud-like marshmallow. Keep whisking and add the peppermint extract. Beat for 3 more minutes, until the mixture is stiff and glossy.

Add 3/4 cup of crushed peppermints into the mixture and blend until incorporated. Dump the mixture into the prepared pan, using an oiled spatula to scrape the bowl. (It is going to be messy.) Then top with the remaining crushed peppermint and red sanding sugar for sparkle. Let the pan sit uncovered for 10 to 12 hours.

Using a fine sieve, sprinkle a large piece of parchment paper with powdered sugar. Remove marshmallows from the pan, peel off the aluminum foil and place the plain side onto the powdered sugar. Cut marshmallows into squares using well-oiled kitchen shears. As you cut, coat the clean edges with powdered sugar. *Note: You may have to stop and clean your shears with hot water during the process, but make sure to re-oil them once they're clean.*

GIFTING SUGGESTION:
 Place 10 or so peppermint marshmallows in a clear cellophane bag and tie with baker's twine or ribbon. Add a nice cocoa mix to make it special, and use a few candy canes for garnish. In the spirit of the season, you can always add a few handcrafted mugs and some nice napkins, depending on the price point you want to hit.



MILK PUNCH WITH BUTTERED PECAN INFUSED BOURBON

Buttered Pecan Infused Bourbon

- INGREDIENTS:**
- 1 1/2 cups pecans
 - 1 stick of unsalted butter
 - 1 teaspoon of salt
 - 4 cups bourbon of your choice

DIRECTIONS:
 Melt the butter in a skillet. Toast the pecans in the melted butter until they are golden and fragrant. Season the pecans with salt, then cool to room temperature.

Combine the pecans with the bourbon in a glass container and store the mixture in a cool, dark place for 3 to 4 weeks. Strain the mixture and the bourbon is ready to serve.

Lightly sweetened whipped cream

- INGREDIENTS:**
- 1 cup of cold heavy whipping cream
 - 1 tablespoon of confectioners sugar
 - 1 teaspoon of pure vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS:
 Whip the cream in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a whisk attachment (or hand mixer). When it begins to thicken, add the sugar and vanilla. Beat the mixture until it is firm, but be careful not to over-beat it.

Milk Punch with Buttered Pecan Infused Bourbon

- INGREDIENTS:**
- 2 cups of sugar
 - 4 cups of buttered pecan infused bourbon
 - 4 tablespoons of vanilla extract
 - 1 gallon of whole milk
 - Fresh grated nutmeg



DIRECTIONS:
 In a large glass or metal vessel, dissolve the sugar in the Bourbon and add the vanilla. Pour the milk into the bourbon mixture and stir to combine. Store the mixture in the refrigerator or freeze it to achieve a slushy consistency. The mixture can be stored in the freezer for up to two weeks. To serve, pour the mixture into a punch bowl and garnish it with lightly sweetened whipped cream and top with freshly grated nutmeg. Serve the milk punch over crushed ice or over large milk ice cubes topped with grated nutmeg. *Recipes continue on p.66*

📌 celebrating in the shadow of covid-19 *cont'd*

OYSTER FRY KIT AND INSTRUCTIONS

KIT INCLUDES:

Oyster fry mix, lemons, oysters, tartar sauce, brown paper

Fry Mix

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 sleeve salted Saltine crackers
- 3/4 cup yellow corn meal, medium or coarse grind
- 1 cup of all purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon of flaky kosher sea salt — use Jacobsen Salt Co. — if you have fine grain, use a little less
- 1 1/2 teaspoons of coarse ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 tablespoons of dried parsley
- 1 1/2 teaspoons of garlic powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons of onion powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons of paprika

DIRECTIONS:

Crush crackers in the sleeve and add to the bowl of a food processor fitted with a metal blade, then add all other ingredients and process well.

Store in a glass jar with a fitted lid.

Tartar Sauce

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup of Duke’s Mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons of finely chopped red onion or shallot (soaked in apple cider vinegar for 30 minutes or so and drained)
- 1 tablespoon of chopped parsley
- 1 tablespoon of fresh lemon juice
- Zest of 1 lemon (on microplane)
- 1 1/2 tablespoons of drained sweet relish
- 2 tablespoons of drained dill relish
- 1 1/2 tablespoon of capers
- 1 teaspoon of garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon of onion powder
- 1 tablespoon of apple cider vinegar

DIRECTIONS:

Put all ingredients in the bowl of a food processor fitted with a metal blade, and process until smooth with some texture.

Place in a jar and refrigerate; the mixture will keep up to 2 weeks or so.

Transfer the mixture to a decorative jar with a lid and label before gifting it.

OYSTER FRY DIRECTIONS TO INCLUDE IN THE KIT:

To dredge your oysters, put down a good layer of fry mix in a 9- by 13-inch rimmed sheet pan lined with foil or parchment to make cleanup easier. Place drained oysters in a single layer on the fry mix, then top with more fry mix — be generous, as this will help keep the oysters tender. Fry on medium to medium-high heat (350 degrees) in your choice of neutral frying oil supplemented with a big spoonful of bacon fat (about 1/4 cup or so). Fry for 3 to 4 minutes on the first side or until golden brown, followed by 3 minutes on the second side. Drain on brown paper, newspaper or paper towels.

Season lightly with salt, pepper and lemon juice as soon as they come out of the fryer.

Serve with lemon wedges and tartar sauce.

GIFTING SUGGESTION:

Put your oyster fry kit in a sealed plastic baggie, then place that in a basic brown paper lunch bag, fold over and secure the label, then tie with baker’s twine or other ribbon. 📌

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